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To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/23/02 3:48pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

As a taxpaying citizen and a user of computers since 1983, I am appalled by the possibility that the Microsoft anti-trust case may be settled with little more than a wrist-slap and a punishment that only increases Microsoft's market share.

Over the last 20 years, I have watched Microsoft use its monopoly in Operating Systems to drive out any competing products. Gone are the days of multiple vendors with multiple products providing customers a choice. Now almost every area of computing is dominated by Microsoft products whether it be word processors, spreadsheets, programming interfaces, web browsers, email clients, and many others genres. They have done this by hiding their API's, altering their operating system, and using other "dirty tricks" to ensure that their competitor's software breaks and their's works.

As a citizen, I am insulted by many of the possible remedies involved. The most dangerous being the proposal for Microsoft to provide software to school children. While I agree that it is essential to have computers in every school. Providing Microsoft-only computers only drives out Apple and limits student's exposure to other forms of computing, eventually training them to be the next generation of Microsoft consumers.

Microsoft has proven itself as being harmful to the computing industry with its many alterations of open standards such as Java and Kerberos to reinforce their monopoly on the desktop.

My suggestion for settlement is two-fold. First, to increase the use of computers in schools, I recommend that Microsoft donate the hardware so that Linux can be installed on the machines. As an Open-Source operating system, Linux is far more useful in an educational setting both for its inexpensive installation and maintenance costs, and because students can better understand how computers function. Secondly, Microsoft should be banned from using any proprietary standards for data files and must be forced to open its existing standards. The ability to properly open, read, edit, and save a document should not require software that is controlled by one organization. .doc, .xls, .ppt, are some prime examples. In addition, Microsoft must release and can no longer perform the type of corruptions to HTML, Java, Kerberos, and other systems that they have done in the past.

Thank you for the opportunity to present my opinion.

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